

STATINTL

Dodd Investigation Indicates Corrupt Political Process

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WASHINGTON—The inquiry of the Senate Ethics Committee into allegations of improper conduct levied against Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut exposes some of the serious debilitation of American Government. It is symptomatic of the corruption of our political processes that an honest and courageous public servant should be subjected to such public pillory.



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Senator Dodd's stand against the spiteful behavior of disloyal and disgruntled employees, and against the conscienceless attacks of Drew Pearson, is another notable achievement in his outstanding record of public service. He lifted himself above his colleagues when he defied the Pearson smear and asked for the committee inquiry. For the power of the Pearson smear is so great that lesser men cringe before it, however baseless the accusations may be.

Evidence Trivial

The evidence so far introduced in the committee hearing is utterly trivial. If this is the sum of the allegations, the committee has demeaned itself in bringing them to a public hearing. On the basis of its proceedings in executive session, the committee should have dismissed the charges as baseless and slanderous.

This failure of the committee to act forthrightly, and the quibbling innuendoes of some committee members, evidence an infection of gutter politics at the highest levels of government. It is a serious matter when the U.S. Senate betrays such weakness, for Congress is the keystone of our government.

In a prior case, a congressional committee viciously attacked Governor Sherman Adams, the senior executive on the Eisenhower White House Staff, misrepresenting the casual courtesies of the public administration as a corruption of public responsibility. Governor Adams should have fought to the end against so shameful an attack on a public official. Instead, he resigned, to save the Eisenhower Administration the embarrassment which would attend a prolonged public defense. He and President Eisenhower thereby rendered a serious disservice to the cause of honest government.

Stern Course

Senator Dodd has taken the sterner course of fighting the vicious smears. He deserves the support of all honest citizens in his stand.

The public has a dual responsibility in preserving integrity in government. Its obligation to support honest public officials against the scurrilous attack of unprincipled detractors is no less important than its obligation to uncover and punish malefactors who betray the public trust.

The evidence adduced before the Senate Ethics Committee indicates that the complaining employees who filched papers from Senator Dodd's office files, and Drew Pearson who masterminded the smear operation, are the persons who merit public condemnation. Senator Dodd has again demonstrated the courage which has distinguished his entire record of public service.